

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

Memorandum on Mexico City Policy and Assistance for Voluntary Population Planning

January 23, 2009

Memorandum for the Secretary of State [and] the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development

Subject: Mexico City Policy and Assistance for Voluntary Population Planning

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151b(f)(1)), prohibits nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that receive Federal funds from using those funds "to pay for the performance of abortions as a method of family planning, or to motivate or coerce any person to practice abortions." The August 1984 announcement by President Reagan of what has become known as the "Mexico City Policy" directed the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to expand this limitation and withhold USAID funds from NGOs that use non-USAID funds to engage in a wide range of activities, including providing advice, counseling, or information regarding abortion, or lobbying a foreign government to legalize or make abortion available. The Mexico City Policy was in effect from 1985 until 1993, when it was rescinded by President Clinton. President George W. Bush reinstated the policy in 2001, implementing it through conditions in USAID grant awards, and subsequently extended the policy to "voluntary population planning" assistance provided by the Department of State.

These excessively broad conditions on grants and assistance awards are unwarranted. Moreover, they have undermined efforts to promote safe and effective voluntary family planning programs in foreign nations. Accordingly, I hereby revoke the Presidential memorandum of January 22, 2001, for the Administrator of USAID (Restoration of the Mexico City Policy), the Presidential memorandum of March 28, 2001, for the Administrator of USAID (Restoration of the Mexico City Policy), and the Presidential memorandum of August 29, 2003, for the Secretary of State (Assistance for Voluntary Population Planning). In addition, I direct the Secretary of State and the Administrator of USAID to take the following actions with respect to conditions in voluntary population planning assistance and USAID grants that were imposed pursuant to either the 2001 or 2003 memoranda and that are not required by the Foreign Assistance Act or any other law: (1) immediately waive such conditions in any current grants, and (2) notify current grantees, as soon as possible, that these conditions have been waived. I further direct that the Department of State and USAID immediately cease imposing these conditions in any future grants.

This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

BARACK OBAMA

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., January 27, 2009]

NOTE: This memorandum was published in the *Federal Register* on January 28.

Categories: Communications to Federal Agencies : Mexico City Policy and Voluntary Population Planning assistance, memorandum.

Subjects: Development, U.S. Agency for International : Mexico City Policy, rescission of; State, Department of : Voluntary Population Planning, rescission of limits on assistance for.

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